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ABSTRACT

A non-profit counseling and referral center, the Center was established in 1972 to alleviate delinquency problems in Los Lunas (New Mexico), with special reference to Chicanos. The Center used specific direct youth services to identify: barriers to services for Chicanos in Los Lunas and to provide referral services to overcome those barriers; methods to increase the capability of a neighborhood Chicano group to provide services; methods to increase the participation of Chicano youth in the decision-making process of social services at the state and local level; and methods of dealing with and alleviating the problem of cultural and racial differences. Personal interviews were conducted with 250 Chicano youth; 3,200 questionnaires were administered to youth, school teachers and administrators, youth serving agencies, and law enforcement personnel. Utilizing a statewide children and youth resource directory and staff personal knowledge, agencies with specific services to the Chicano community were identified. Chicano professional manpower and organizations provided training sessions to increase the staff's capacity in program development and management. Between 1972 and 1974, the Center served 316 youth, of which 80% were Chicanos. The program was successful in its efforts to: prevent delinquency, promote Chicano involvement and attitude change, and develop rapport between youth, parents, school and public agencies. (NQ)

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RIO GRANDE YOUTH CARE CENTER

FINAL REPORT

[1974]

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1971 and 1972, based on Uniform Crimes Report (UCR) submitted by law enforcement agencies throughout the country, Albuquerque was ranked as the city with the highest number of serious crimes known to the police per 100,000 population. Juvenile arrests, which have steadily increased nationwide, made up nearly half of all crime arrests in Albuquerque.

Twenty miles from Albuquerque a small town by the name of Los Lunas was experiencing some of the same urban crime problems. Los Lunas was not fortunate enough to avail itself of alternative programs in crime prevention or of any programs to assist parents or youth being processed through the Juvenile Justice System. Juvenile delinquency could not be identified since existing law enforcement agencies were not keeping records concerning juvenile crime. School administrators were at a loss in dealing with youth problems because of the rapid growth, limited staff and lack of qualified personnel. In addition problems identified dealt with drug abuse and racial tension of which no one had the experience to deal with them. The Community itself was rural oriented, but youth were oriented towards urban activity. This was further encouraged since youth of the area necessarily journeyed to the city for most all activities since there were no youth serving agencies or activities in the area.

Los Lunas is a rural community and boasts a high incidence of poverty. The population of this and other surrounding communities is estimated at 11,000 residents, with approximately 500 families (or about 2,000 people) in the low income category. There are approximately 3,500 school age children. Traditionally Los Lunas is a quiet town and approximately half of the youth leave town upon graduation to seek employment elsewhere. However, during the past five years it has become the bedroom community for metropolitan Albuquerque and hundreds of new residents have moved into the area. Los Lunas has been a majority Chicano town with pueblo Indians attending school from a local reservation. With the new population came new problems. These problems ranged from ethnic misunderstandings to drug abuse on a wide scale.

In January of 1972, parents began to realize that there were problems which the school was not addressing itself to. These problems were presented to school administrators, school board and to local law enforcement agencies. No resolutions were employed to resolve these problems and as a result the community turned to its State Governor for assistance in identifying and suggesting some alternatives.

In March of 1972, the Governor for the State of New Mexico appointed a task force to study the situation. Upon completion of the study the report submitted to the Governor the following problem areas.

A. That there was a high rate of venereal disease.

B. That there was a high rate of drug abuse.

C. That there was a high rate of truancy and absenteeism at the schools.

D. That there was a high rate of alcohol intake by youth.

E. That schools were not properly assisting youth with drop-out tendencies.

F. That high racial tension had contributed toward gang fights at school.

G. That the Chicano group and the Anglo (cowboy) group lacked understanding of one another.

As a result of this investigation by the Governor's office a group of parents and community residents joined together and attempted to discuss the problems and develop some strategy for an intervention program. A non-profit corporation was established, called the Rio Grande Youth Care Inc. This group developed a proposal which was submitted to minorities studies, (SRS-HEW) in Washington, D.C. The proposed program was funded in July 1972 and began to develop program priorities in September of the same year. The Rio Grande Youth Care Inc., developed by-laws which gave them the responsibility of managing a program and setting policy. In September 1972 staff was employed for program implementation.

Since little official information was available concerning juvenile crimes, program staff addressed themselves to the problems outlined by the Governor's Study Team. It was difficult to design research capabilities in terms of measuring program objectives, since they were changing as coordination and communication were developed with youth serving institutions and the community.

Program staff posited the following objectives as its priorities:

1. To disseminate information regarding venereal disease problems in an effort at remediation.

2. To hold educational seminars regarding the drug abuse problem with an emphasis on reducing the rate of drug abuse.

3. To assist schools with problems of absenteeism and to counsel youngsters who have dropped out of school in an effort to reintegrate them into a school setting.

4. To reduce the alcoholic intake by youth.

5. To minimize racial tension by bringing both groups together and by assisting with improved communication and utilization.

6. To coordinate activities with the schools and law enforcement agencies in order to foster improved youth activity.

7. To address areas which youth themselves view as problem areas and to develop meaningful roles in the decision-making process.

8. To promote greater communications between parents, the community and youth related agencies.

9. To promote participation in organized activities.

10. To provide services in judicial problems to youth offenders.

11. To provide educational and vocational guidance.

The Rio Grande Youth Care Inc. became the governing body with the Valencia County Commission as fiscal agents. The power of Directors encouraged the program director to seek and develop staff training. They also requested that priorities be outlined as they were interpreted from the local communities, schools and law enforcement agencies.

II. METHODOLOGY

There are many theories concerning juvenile delinquency, some based on hard research that delinquency has its roots in lower class membership. Conditions of poverty are such that there exists a relative deprivation of intellectual and interpersonal experiences that are necessary for achievement in a success oriented society. The result of such conditions is that lower-class children are handicapped if not doomed to failure. This particular kind of handicap gives rise to deviant norms and alternative sources of satisfaction, and illegal activities are usually the result (Empey, Lubeck, La Porte 1971).

Reflecting this point of view, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, "The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society," 1967, stated that "...delinquents tend to come from background of social and economic deprivation. Their families tend to have lower than average incomes and social status... It is unescapable that juvenile delinquency is directly related to conditions bred by Poverty." Since 46% of juvenile offenders are Chicanos and further 56% of juveniles in detention and correctional facilities are also Chicano, the program intent was to alleviate the delinquency problem with concentrated effort and focus on the Chicano community. In line with this the Rio Grande Youth Care Center utilized specific direct youth services as a vehicle to demonstrate research which would identify:

1. Barriers to services for Chicanos in Los Lunas and to provide referral services to overcome those barriers.

2. Methods to increase the capability of a neighborhood Chicano group to provide services.

3. Methods to increase the participation of Chicano youth in the decision-making process of social services at the state and local level.

4. Methods of dealing with and alleviating the problem of cultural and racial differences.

III. PROCESS

1. Direct individual services are offered by the center during regular office hours between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition, telephone services for call-in after hours are available on a 24-hour basis. Services are delivered on a voluntary self-referral basis and also through referrals made by schools, agencies, court, probation and law enforcement agencies. The center provides on-going public dissemination of services available through workshops, news media and conferences with related agencies. The center offers a free clothing store and besides activities at the center, the program frequently sponsors activities on school grounds.

A. The Rio Grande Youth Care Board and Staff implemented steps to gather information concerning the needs and problems of Chicano youth. This was accomplished by personal interviews, questionnaires and participation at various youth conferences. The program staff interviewed 250 Chicano youth and implemented the use of 3200 questionnaires. The surveyed population included:

1) Youth
2) School teachers and administrators
3) Youth serving agencies
4) Law enforcement

The results of these studies were presented to the Los Lunas City Council, local law enforcement agencies, Valencia County Commission and the local public schools. The program staff identified agencies with specific services to the Chicano community. This was done by personal interviews, utilizing a statewide children and youth resource directory published by the New Mexico Commission on Children and Youth and through board and staff personal knowledge of the area. The program staff utilized both identification processes (need vs. services) to assess the appropriateness of services from current service agencies.

B. The Rio Grande Youth Care Center Board implemented training sessions for its staff to increase their capacity in porgram development and program management. In an effort to accomplish this Chicano professional manpower and organizations were identified and contacted to provide the necessary training.

C. Youth were elected to the board of directors to provde decision-making roles. In addition, staff members apssed on decision-making skills acquired at training sessions to Chicano clientele at various intervals to assist them in participating in state, regional and local policy groups such as LEAA planning, youth conferences, manpower planning, Community Action Programs, etc.

D. The program staff initiated processes to identify the humanistic problem of cultural and racial differences. Los Lunas historically has felt the division of the Chicano and so called "cowboy" anglo. This problem was further compounded by the imigration into Los Lunas as a result of new housing subdivisions. The staff documented this problem and officially surfaced it through personal interviews and organized youth activities. Using this knowledge, the staff developed methodology to implement joint activities which could serve as a vehicle to cause changes in attitude and foster better communications between the different racial groups.

IV. STAFFING AND TRAINING

1. Staff and Organization

The Rio Grande Youth Care Center is operated by a Director. Line staff is composed of 5 employees which include one secretary and four youth workers. Program staff policies and direction are implemented by a nine (9) member board of directors which is broadly representative of the community. The board includes youth representation. A profile of staff members are included in the appendix.

2. Training

The Rio Grande Youth Care Program immediately during its infant stages sought, scheduled and required staff to attend various training sessions available in

New Mexico. The staff participated in a total of 60 man-days of training. The training sessions assisted program staff to enhance their knowledge of the juvenile processes, agency delivery of services methodology, counseling techniques, organizational skills and problem solving approaches and skills. Staff training was provided as follows:

Training -- Expressed in terms of name of facilitator, types of training and time in training.

1) La Llave (drug treatment program), drug education, counseling techniques, clientele relationships, referral methodology -- one week.

2) Bernalillo County Detention Home (juvenile detention), juvenile justice procedures, counseling skills, community reintegration methodology, problem identification skills, delinquency profiles -- one week.

3) Springer (boys correction facility), youth crime incidents, youth crime career prevention, rights of children and youth education, juvenile justice processes, counseling techniques, education and identification in emotional disturbances-- one week.

4) Various boards (public and private policy-making boards and commissions), administrative skills, decision-making processes, problem identification skills, needs assessment techniques, methodology in identifying alternatives, community relations -- 3 weeks (cumulative).

5) Southwest Youth Development Project, Council for Youth, Young Citizens for Action (neighborhood youth programs in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe) role-playing skills, program development skills, skills in community report, youth involvement, needs assessment skills -- 2 weeks.

6) Various programs fiscal agents, financial accountability skills, bookkeeping education, grantsmanship, financial report writing -- one week.

7) Criminal Justice Program, Committee on Children and Youth, case-finding skills, planning skills, data collection and sampling techniques, report writing, research methodology -- 2 weeks.

8) Workshops and conferences, problem identification, program dissemination skills, policy-setting, information sharing, youth involvement -- 2 weeks.

A POPULATION SAMPLED AND SERVED

Los Lunas, New Mexico, is a rural type of community. The population of this and other surrounding smaller communities is estimated to 11,100 residents, with approximately 500 families (or about 2,000 people) in the low income category. There are approximately 3,500 school-age children in grades 1-12.

1. Survey

The sample was drawn as follows:

A) 250 youth interviewed composed as follows:

1) 90 Anglo youth which consisted of 70 "straight" kids and 10 youth referred for supportive services;

2) 110 Chicano youth composed of 60 "straight" kids and 50 youth referred for supportive services;

3) 50 Indian youth composed of 30 "straight" kids and 20 youth referred.

2. 3200 questionnaires were tabulated and respondents represented the following areas:

A) business sector;

B) social agency workers and administrators;

C) community lay people;

D) school teachers and administrators;

E) law enforcement (both officers and administrators);

F) elected officials;

G) youth under 18.

3. Served

The Rio Grande Youth Care Center attempts to serve all youth in the area; therefore, no population target sample was selected to receive services. However, intake records on file indicate that approximately 80% of the clientele served were

Chicanos, and this served as a very visible and representative group from which to measure program success or failure. Since New Mexico lacks a strong, concrete and comparative data base on youth problems and needs independent and dependent variables were difficult to study. In line with this, any method to quantify hypothesized relationships between variables would be inaccurate and misleading. It is anticipated that the program would have to be in full operation for at least two and one-half years to effectively develop, implement and state the hypothesizes tested and its results. The program at this point, however, can be evaluated on the terms of meeting its stated objectives. The following table demonstrates a breakdown on the clientele served during project period.

Age	No.	Income	No.	Race	No.
Under 12	103	Less than $3000	79	Anglo	74
12-17	154	$3000-$6000	89	Spanish	220
18-21	33	Over $6000	42	Negro	0
Over 21	16	Unknown	96	Indian	12

VI. RESULTS

Problem Area		Recidivism
Referral	No.	
Incorrigibility	3	0
Educational Assistance	67	6
Drunkenness	15	7
Drug Abuse	17	7
Truancy	80	4
Unemployed	61	0
Runaway	11	2
Valdalism	3	0
Burglary, DWI		
Assault and Battery	12	5
Other	37	12
	316	43

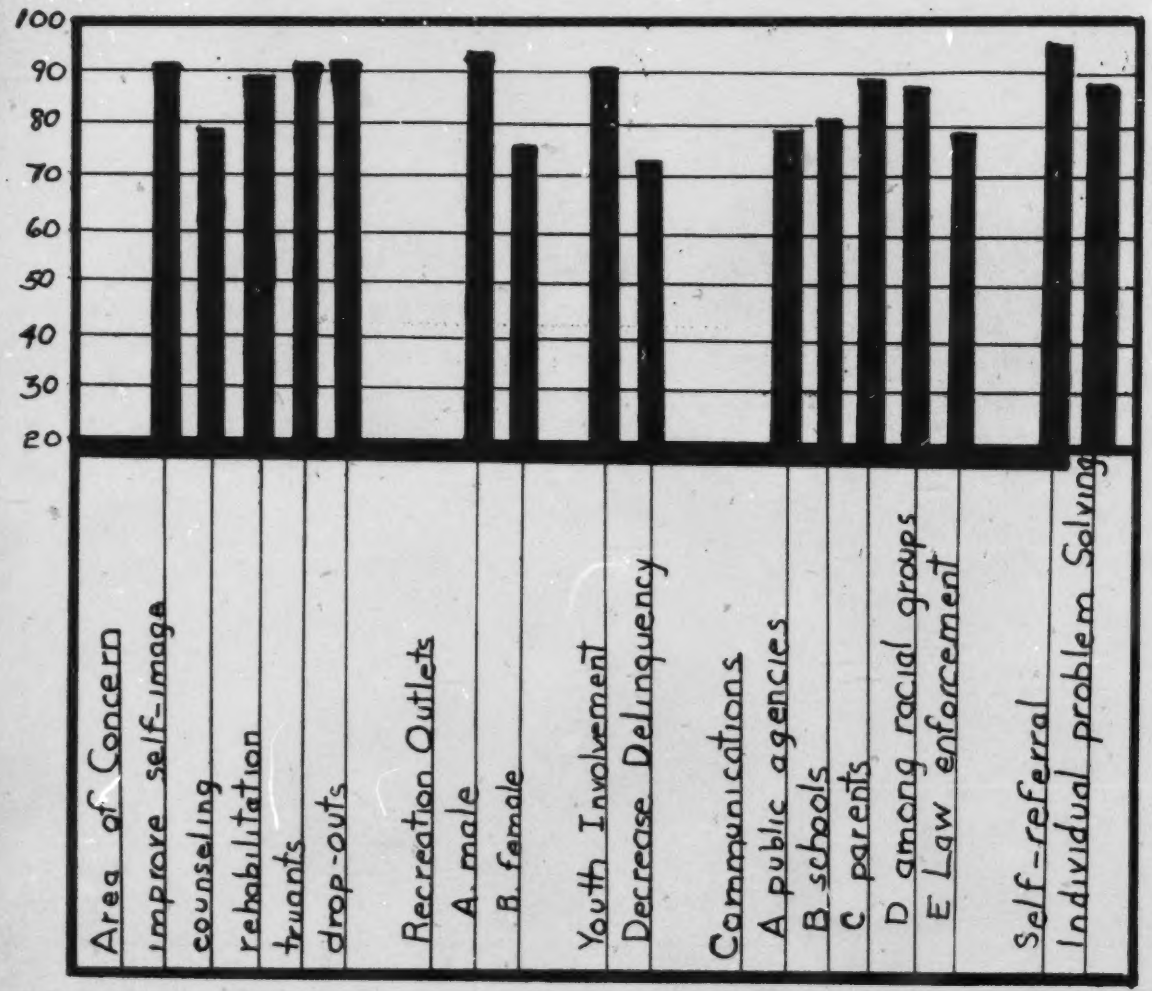
Referral Source		Joint Activities	
Agency	No.	No. of Activities	Participants
Los Lunas Schools	127	55	7330
Los Lunas Policw	2	(joint recreational activities	
Adult Progation	6	to cross racial boundaries)	
Sheriff's Office	2		
Juvenile Probation	16		
Other Agencies	3		
Self-referral	160		
	316		

In analyzing results of intake records and clientele interviews, it was found that the referral and orientation services available at the center had a major impact on two of the three factors listed below which involved the knowledge of agency services available and process to receive these services and the area where clientele felt ashamed to request these services from the various agencies. Statistical breakdown on the specific impact is difficult to express in qualitative terms. Therefore, this is not attempted at this time.

Population	No Knowledge of Public Agency	Felt Public Agency Insensitive	Ashamed to Contact Public Agency
Under 12	84%		16%
12-17	62%	18%	20%
18-21	48%	34%	18%
Over 21	42%	39%	19%

SUMMARY

In reviewing the entire program operations, it appears that the program has been successful in its efforts to prevent delinquency, promote Chicano involvement, attitude change and developing rapport between youth, parents, school and public agencies. The following bar graphs indicate what areas of development the program was most successful in. 100 points would indicate complete success and total alleviation of problem area. Degrees of achievement on the chart are based on frequency of success identified by intake records, questionnaires and interviews.



Program operations were also evaluated on the basis or organizational structure and problem approach methodology. On these basis, it is then clear that staff was highly successful in dealing with individual referrals on a one-to-one basis with the size of staff. The organizational structure to include direction from board, administrative functions of director and program responeibilities of staff are found to be feasible for this type of operation. Program structure is in line with general objectives and is developed in a very good manner so as to allow for expansion without major revisions to its structure. The program organizational structure is highlighted by its visible flexible make-up which will allow the program to respond immediately as the needs to the community change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly visible that the Rio Grande Youth Center has been successful in assisting troubled youth and providing Chicano youth with supportive survival skills to succeed within today's social norms. Given the nature of the facilities and the size of the staff, the program has been very successful.

In line with this report the following recommendations are made to assist the center in ac[illegible]ving their objectives:

1. It is recommended that objectives, research methodology and data collection activity be defined with more specificity.

2. It is recommended that parent involvement in group counseling be increased.

3. It is recommended that office hours be structured more closely with youth "free'time." (After 5 p.m. and weekends)

4. It is recommended that the board of directors increase their efforts to seek and make use of multi-funding possibilities to make facility improvements, equipment and increase staff.

5. It is recommended that a more structured on-going and in-service training sessions be implemented.

6. It is recommended that the center increase its efforts to provide more activities and equal service to girls.

The Director of the Rio Grande Youth and Health Care Program is required to have the following minimum qualifications:

1. At least 2 years college, preferably in the behavioral sciences.

2. At least 2 years experience in community organization and development.

3. At least 2 years with youth-related projects.

4. Must be able to relate to community problems and youth.

5. Must be knowledgeable in youth-related projects.

6. Must have some experience in proposal writing.

7. Must be qualified in evaluation and data collection.

The Director for the Rio Grande Youth and Health Care Program will have the following responsibilities:

1. Must conduct staff meetings, board meetings and general public presentations.

2. Must keep the board aware of all policies, procedures and youth projects that will involve community and local support.

3. Must maintain all records,. evaluation data, documentations, files, performance material and other general administrative work.

4. Must establish a good working relationship with the following people and agencies:

   (a) School officials and administrators
   (b) Law enforcement agencies
   (c) Youth-related agencies
   (d) City and county officials
   (e) Community businessmen and leaders
   (f) Various youth programs
   (g) Parents
   (h) Youth of all ages
   (i) Lawyers, doctors, governmental dignataries
   (j) People at the "grass root" level
   (k) Staff members and board representatives

5. Must be responsible for seeking financial support.

6. Must oversee all projects and activities and must decide whether or not they will benefit the youth as well as the community.

7. Must keep monthly reports, daily work schedules and other data pertaining to the smooth operation of the youth program.

8. Must involve as many people as possible in all projects.

9. Must serve as public relations man in dealing with youth activities and should create a fine working relationship with the radio, television and news media.

10. Will supervise and give staff proper guidance and direction in all projects and activities.

11. Must be able to place youth in training programs, job placements and re-enrollment in schools.